

spicuous for the acridity of its religious zeal. " It is remarkable/⁷ says Mr Prescott, " that a system so monstrous as that of the Inquisition, presenting the most effectual barrier, probably, that was ever opposed to the progress of knowledge, should have been revived at the close of the fifteenth century, when the light of civilisation was rapidly advancing over every part of Europe. It is more remarkable that it should have occurred in Spain, at this time under a government which had displayed great religious independence on more than one occasion, and which had paid uniform regard to the rights of its subjects, and pursued a generous policy in reference to their intellectual culture. Where, we are tempted to ask when we behold the persecution of an innocent, industrious people for the crime of adhesion to the faith of their ancestors, where was the charity which led the old Castilian to reverence valour and virtue in an infidel, though an enemy; where the chivalrous self-devotion which led an Aragonese monarch three centuries before to give away his life in defence of the persecuted sectaries of Provence; where the independent spirit which prompted the Castilian nobles, during the very last reign, to reject with scorn the proposed interference of the pope himself in their concerns, that they were now reduced to bow their necks to a few fanatic priests, the members of an order which, in Spain at least, was quite as conspicuous for ignorance as for intolerance ? True, indeed, the Castilians, and the Aragonese subsequently still more, gave such evidence of their aversion to the institution that it can hardly be believed the clergy would have succeeded in fastening it upon them, had they not availed themselves of the popular prejudice against the Jews."

It was very ominous for the future that "the Catholic Kings," as Ferdinand and Isabella were called, used their enhanced powers in the service of religious persecution as directed by the Inquisition. Whilst the rest of Western Europe was being stirred by the reviving breath of a new age of intellectual and spiritual life, the power of the crown in Spain was allying itself with the power of the Church to asphyxiate this revived life, as hostile to orthodoxy and autocracy alike. The age of the new Spanish monarchy was, alas, the age of the revived Spanish Inquisition. "When an en-